The first few chapters of *Three Cups of Tea* are all about Greg Mortenson and what brought him to his current setting when the story begins. Mortenson is a mountain climber who was raised in Tanzania, Africa. A few years before the story picks up, Mortenson’s sister, Christa, died from her inability to overcome the disabilities meningitis left her with. He was trying to reach the top of K2 in honor of her when another climbing team’s failures stopped him. To his disappointment, Mortenson must return home without reaching the summit. In his state of depression, the climber wanders away from his team and guide, Mouzafer. He eventually finds his guide after spending the night alone on the mountain side. Exhaustion causes Mortenson to stray from the trail again; he finds a village he believes to be Askole, and the chief takes him in. It’s later revealed that the village is actually Korphe, a struggling, poverty-stricken society. Mortenson decides he will return to the village one day and build a school for the children there. He returns home to California working as an ER nurse and writing letters to celebrities asking for their support of his efforts. Mortenson makes friends with some of his coworkers who give him access to a mountaineering journal. He eventually receives $12,000 from Jean Hoerni, a wealthy scientist, because of an article in the journal. Mortenson proceeds to sell all of his possessions and move to Pakistan to build the school.

Mortenson’s stupidity was on the verge of unbearable at the beginning to the novel. If he got lost one more time on that mountain I was going to stop reading. However, the story drastically improved once Mortenson made it to the village and we got to read about what life was like in the most underdeveloped parts of Pakistan. I knew that life was difficult in these parts of the world, but I guess I never put it together that they couldn’t afford to pay a teacher, let alone build a school. His decision to build a school for the children there is one that should be admired by everyone.

When looking at the novel thus far, it’s clear the Greg Mortenson has characteristics that span over time. Mortenson’s persistence is observed numerous times; from his quest to reach the summit of K2 to his struggle to raise $12,000 to build the school, this persistence is constant in Mortenson’s life. The second characteristic is compassion. Because he was raised in Tanzania, Africa, Mortenson has a developed understanding of what the less glamorous side of life is like. It isn’t surprising that he decided to help out the kids in Pakistan by building a school.